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ABSTRACT

This book offers a balanced introduction to and examination of contemporary Japanese education that considers criticisms of Japanese schooling practices made by the participants themselves. While the post World War 2 system of schooling has provided valuable ingredients for economic success, the book argues that these have been accompanied by unfavorable developments, such as excessively competitive examinations for entry into schools, stifling uniformity, bullying, and monoculturalist orientations that undervalue non-Japanese ethnicity and foster the development of a distorted world view for mainstream children. The book examines the main developments of modern schooling in Japan, from the beginning of the Meiji era up to the present, including analysis of the most recent reforms. By drawing extensively on detailed ethnographic studies and interviews with students and teachers, the book shows the diversity of school experiences and develops a new picture of the role that schooling plays for individuals and the wider society. As a study of the issues of social inequality and the scope for autonomy within the Japanese education system, the book will be useful for students and educators alike. (Contains 10 figures, 11 tables, 22 case studies, and extensive references.) (BT)

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